

# Offenders and Staff at Westville Correctional Facility Build New Wooden Conference Table for Governor's Office

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"When Dave told me he would have a new table made for the office, I wouldn't have dreamed it could be something like this. It's the most beautiful piece of furniture I've ever seen and the craftsmanship is second to none."

Mitch Daniels,  
Indiana Governor



Photo Caption: Indiana Governor's Office Table

INDIANAPOLIS (July 17, 2007) - Alex McEathron is used to a hectic schedule of designing and building countertops, desks and cabinets at the Westville Correctional Facility's carpentry shop. However, last fall, the 14-year employee received a unique request from Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner J. David Donahue to design and construct a new conference table for the

governor's office.

"The old table was rickety and in need of major repairs," Donahue said. "Building a new table was an opportunity to showcase the talent of our staff and offenders."

McEathron finalized the design for a 16-foot long by six-foot wide wooden conference table in late 2006. He enlisted the help of eight offenders and construction of the new table began in January.

"We had never done anything like this before," McEathron said. "There were times when we had knots in our stomachs and lost lots of sleep."

The materials for the table come from six varieties of trees on the grounds of the Westville facility. The offenders and McEathron spent 2,000 hours cutting, chiseling, gluing, sanding, staining and finishing the wood. The 900-pound table was completed and delivered to the Governor Mitch Daniels' office in late June.

Daniels showed off the table for the first time today. "When Dave told me he would have a new table made for the office, I wouldn't have dreamed it could be something like this," he said. "It's the most beautiful piece of furniture I've ever seen and the craftsmanship is second to none."

"It was truly an honor," McEathron said. "We hope the table will be used and enjoyed for generations to come."

Westville is a medium security facility. After completing their sentences, offenders are released back into one of Indiana's 92 counties. The woodworking program here, along with programs at other statewide DOC facilities, offers offenders the opportunity to learn skills they can use when returning to society.

"We help individuals learn constructive activities so they can become productive citizens," Donahue said. "This project shows their professional commitment."

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### **Oval Table Office of the Governor**

On June 29, 2007, Department of Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue presented Governor Mitch Daniels with a new 16-foot long by six-foot wide wooden conference table for his office. At each end of the table, there is a hand-carved, three-foot medallion - one features the Indiana state flag symbol

and the other depicts the seal of the State of Indiana. A state map, with hand-laid insets of all 92 counties, dominates the middle of the table.

The table was completely built by hand using trees from the Westville Correctional Facility. Alex McEathron, a highly skilled carpenter and Department of Correction employee, designed and built the table. Eight offenders assisted in the construction - which took approximately six months to complete. Special jigs, band saws and wood chisels were used to create the pieces of the table. The offenders developed a number of job skills, including: sawing; routing; layout; measurement; calculating; making compound miter cuts; chiseling; wood joinery; gluing; sanding; staining and finishing.

The table is the primary meeting location in the governor's office. Dignitaries, business leaders, reporters and Hoosiers will gather around this table for generations to come.

## Details

Table Dimensions: Six feet wide. Sixteen feet long. Six inches thick (in the middle).

Dimension of Medallions: Three feet (hand-carved white pine with a walnut base)

Weight: 900 pounds total. Top - 500 pounds. Base - 400 pounds.

## Materials:

(Source) Trees from the Westville Correctional Facility

(Top) Cherry, oak, spalder maple, tulip poplar, walnut and white pine

(Base) Oak

Construction Start: January 3, 2007

Construction Finish: June 28, 2007

Delivered to Governor Daniels' Office: June 29, 2007 Hours to Build: 2,000 man-hours.

Number of Workers: 9

Total Cost: \$625 - for materials and supplies (glass inserts, finish, glue, plywood, etc.)

Sawmill: PEN Products' West Farm in Michigan City

Construction Site: Westville Correctional Facility's Carpentry Shop

## About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers.

The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.